



BEYOND THE EXHIBITS

North Carolina Museum of History

History in Every Direction: Tar Heel Junior Historian Association Discovery Gallery

Take a look at our *History in Every Direction: THJHA Discovery Gallery* on the third floor! This gallery, unique in the nation, showcases the most recent winners of THJHA Annual Contests, allowing junior historians to share what they have learned with thousands of annual visitors.

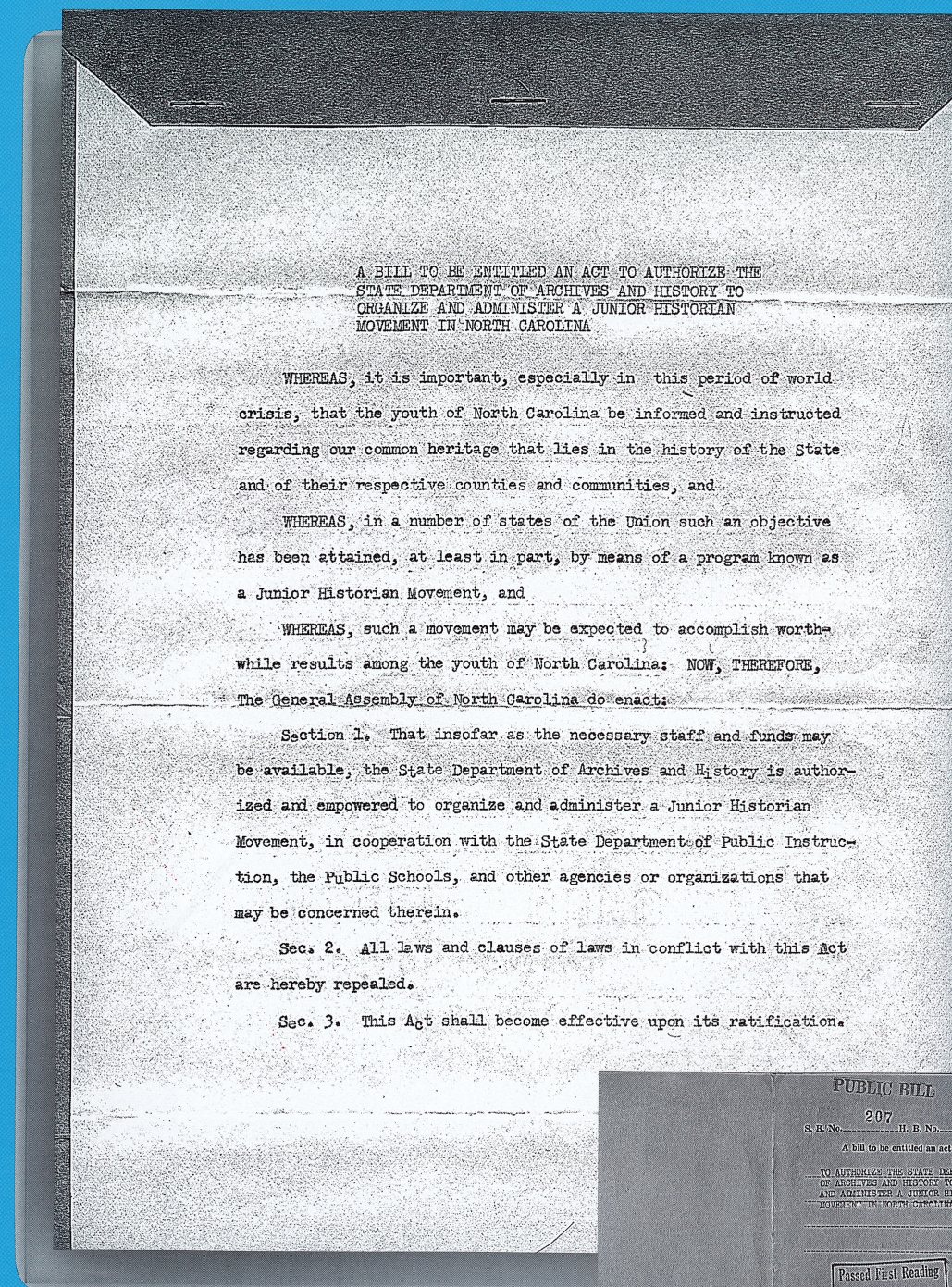
The gallery also features hands-on activities related to exploring history through five kinds of primary sources: artifacts, documents, photographs, oral history, and buildings and sites.

Below is additional information connecting *History in Every Direction: THJHA Discovery Gallery* to educational resources. For the richest student experience, complete the educational packet:

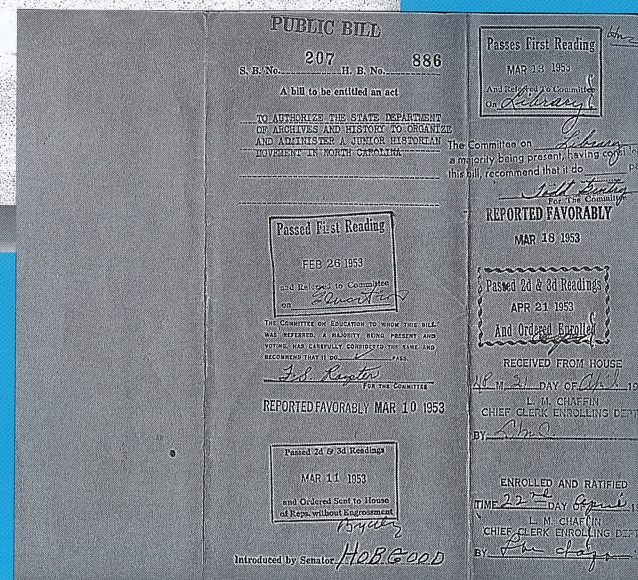
- Read “The Junior Historian Movement” article from the Spring 2003 *Tar Heel Junior Historian* Magazine.
- Read “The Birth of the Tar Heel Junior Historian Association” article from the Spring 2003 *Tar Heel Junior Historian* Magazine.
- Design a new Tar Heel Junior Historian Association logo!
- Read “Historians Piece It All Together” from the Spring 2009 *Tar Heel Junior Historian* Magazine to discover how Historians use documents and photographs to learn more about the past.
- Think like a Junior Historian and use those skills to analyze Mary Porter’s will.

The Legislative Bill That Established THJHA

taken from Session Laws of 1953



The front of the legislative bill (#207) that established the Tar Heel Junior Historian Association appears above. The back of the bill is to the right. Images courtesy of North Carolina State Archives.



The Junior Historian Movement

by Rebecca Lewis

Junior historian organizations have arisen in many states at one time or another and have taken slightly different forms wherever they have emerged. But all junior historian societies have been remarkably

was an important step in the study of local history and in the preservation of our heritage. And it seems to have started in two places almost simultaneously.

How the Junior Historian Movement Started

The first development of a statewide junior historical society took place in December 1938, when the Indiana Junior Historical Society was formed. This first junior historian program developed from a single club. The Marion High School History Club of Grant County, Indiana, attracted so many students with its theme "History Is Fun" that it had to limit the number of members during the second year of existence. Too many students wanted to join, and the club's officers were afraid that the club was getting out of control! The club was incredibly successful, sponsoring community events and even writing a book on Grant County history. Wanting to share their experiences with other schools, club members held a student-teacher convention in Marion to explore the possibility of starting a statewide society. Seventy teachers and students from twenty schools signed on at this convention. Sponsored by the Indiana

Historical Society, the first statewide junior historian association became a reality.

Meanwhile, the Texas State Historical Association (TSHA), concerned about the lack of knowledge of state history among students, was also planning a "young people's branch" to work in conjunction with the senior organization. In 1939 the director of



Junior historians of the Tribe of Teal Wing are shown in front of the gold seal of the Hall of State in Dallas, Texas. Members are dressed in eight Southwestern Indian costumes, ca. 1955. Image courtesy of the Texas State Historical Association, Austin. All rights reserved.

alike in their purpose or intention. That is, all junior historian societies have taken as the root of their existence the idea that the events that happen at home are just as important and history-making as those that happen elsewhere. This emphasis on local history can be seen in the mission statement of the Tar Heel Junior Historian Association, "to encourage the study of local and state history and to help young people better understand and appreciate their place in history." The formation of junior historian societies outside the school system



Junior historians are portrayed in this cartoon "The Thrilling Story of His Life," by John Knott, *Dallas Morning News*, ca. 1940. Reprinted with permission of the Dallas Morning News.

by the North Carolina Genealogical Society and consists of a check for \$25 and a certificate.

Fall 1978: It is announced that the Malcolm Blue Junior Historians of Aberdeen (advised by Martha Clayton and Doris Blue) have received a \$100 grant from the America the Beautiful Fund, Washington, D.C., for an oral history project. It is also announced that the Skewarkians of Bear Grass School in Williamston (advised by Elizabeth Roberson) have received a \$3,900 Youthgrant from the National Endowment for the Humanities. The money will be used for a research and film project.

September 1978: A newly revised student/adviser manual is published. The manual is compiled by Ted Henson, 1977 North Carolina Teacher of the Year and a former junior historian adviser.

1978-1979: The first Artifact Search Contest, sponsored by the North Carolina Museum of History Associates, is offered for this school year. Winning students will be honored at Awards Day 1979 in May.

November 1978: It is announced that the Martin '76ers (LeRoy Martin Junior High School, Raleigh, Anne Kennedy and Mary Evelyn Jackman, advisers) have received a Certificate of Commendation from AASLH for their efforts to preserve the Pullen Park carousel. It is also announced that the Skewarkians (Bear Grass School, Williamston,

a one-year course of study for eighth-grade students, beginning with the fall of 1983.

Awards Day 1982: Dr. William H. Cartwright, whose work helped to establish THJHA, is a guest speaker.

Awards Day 1983: THJHA marks its thirtieth anniversary.

1986: *Crossroads: THJH Newsletter* begins publication. The newsletter has evolved from the Awards Day issue of the magazine.

Fall 1986: Beginning with this issue of *THJH*, the magazine is published twice a year (fall and spring).

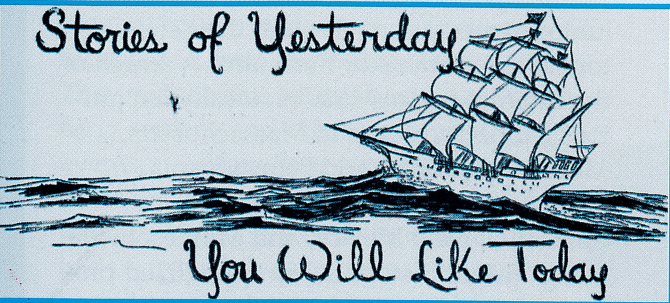
Awards Day 1991: Crowder Crew (Southwest Junior High School, Gastonia, Mikki Bridges and Carol Brittain, advisers) wins the first Rookie Chapter of the Year award, which was sponsored by the Museum of History Associates. A new elementary history quiz is sponsored by the North Carolina Literary and Historical Association.

Awards Day 1992: WHY? (What Happened Yesterday?) Club (Trent Park Elementary School, New Bern, Cille Griffith, adviser) wins the first Chapter of the Year award, which was sponsored by the Museum of History Associates. Also announced is the winner of the new American Revolution Essay Contest, sponsored by the Raleigh Chapter,

The Birth of the Tar Heel Junior Historian Association

by Rebecca Lewis

Discovering the history of the Tar Heel Junior Historian Association, I felt very much like a detective on an investigation. I knew the “short version” of the story—the history that has been published in the *THJHA Adviser Handbook*. This information gave me the basic facts. But I wanted to know more. As THJHA turns fifty, I thought it was time to tell the whole story. So, armed with a few key names and some important dates, I headed to the State Archives to see what information I could find on the “birth” of the association. And what I found surprised me.



The masthead of a brochure that the founders created to promote the association in 1953. Image courtesy of North Carolina State Archives.

As with many historical facts that have been interpreted and then written down, the story of THJHA that I uncovered did not exactly match the story I had read. By looking at original, primary documents in the archives and by interviewing two of the surviving founders of THJHA, I was able to piece together a more complete history of the association. Here is what I found.

The Junior Historian Movement Comes to North Carolina

The “official” history says that THJHA originated when William H. Cartwright

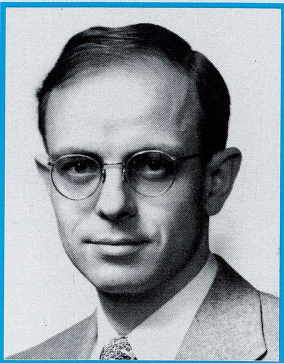
and Jonathan C. McLendon of the education department at Duke University approached the director of the state Department of Archives and History, Christopher Crittenden, and the state superintendent of public instruction,

Charles F. Carroll, with the idea of establishing a junior historian organization in North Carolina. That is true. But it is a simplified version of what really happened. It took many years and much work to get this organization off the ground.

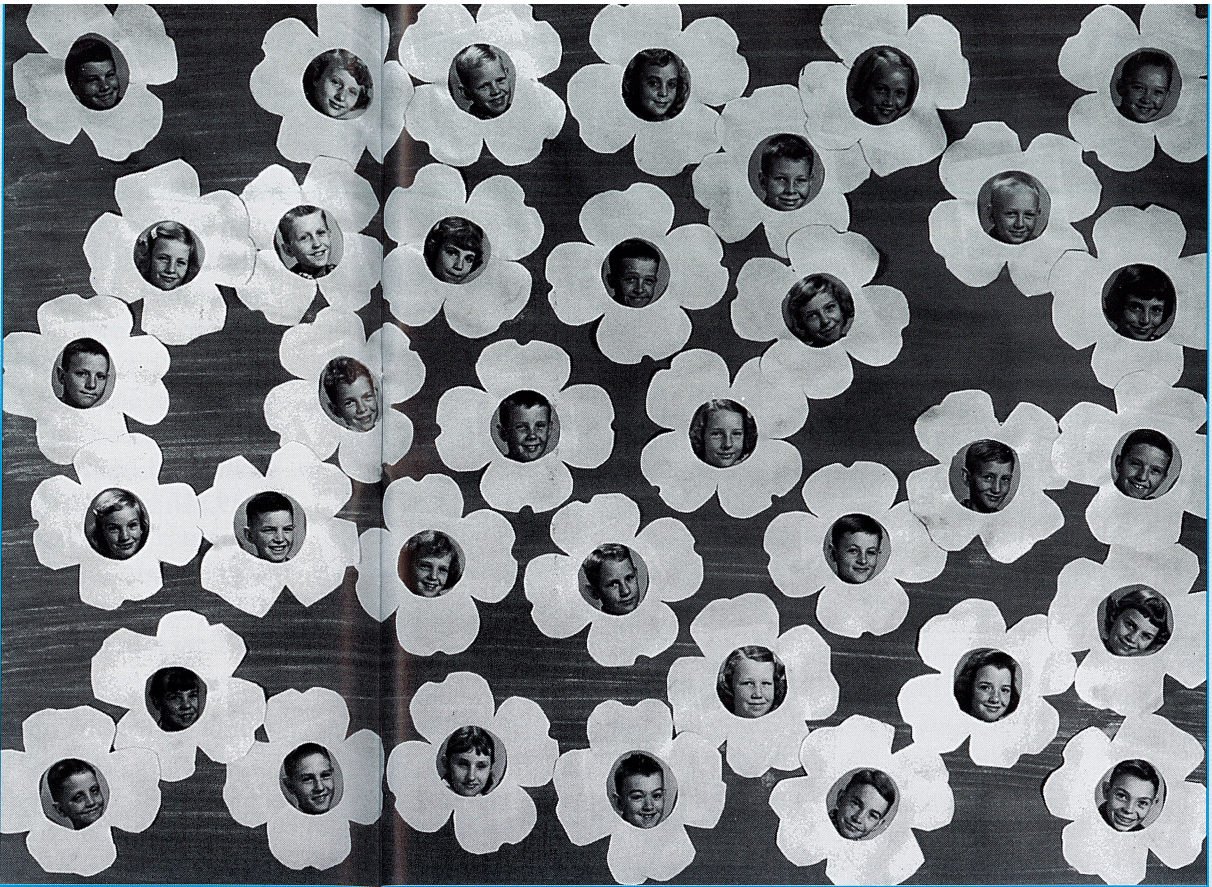
In my search at the archives, I found a letter dated November 26, 1946, from Henry Howard Eddy to Miss Mary Cunningham of the New York State Historical Association. It read:

We are toying with the possibility of starting, in a tentative and experimental manner, a junior historian movement in the state of

North Carolina. From our chat at Washington last month and your conversations with Mrs. Jordan you will be able to recall what the situation is. . . . What about sending us a file, or as much of a file as you can spare,



Dr. William H. Cartwright ca. 1950s. Image courtesy of Duke University Archives.



Members of one of the first THJHA clubs ca. 1950s. The picture was copied from an

October 1954. This is the earliest photograph of Tar Heel Junior Historians found at the State adviser's scrapbook. Image courtesy of North Carolina State Archives.

of The Yorker? I feel that we should have here in the Department a goodly number of examples of publications put out by junior historians. . . .

Henry Howard Eddy was acting as director of the Department of Archives and History during an absence of Christopher Crittenden. This letter indicates that the Department of Archives and History was thinking about a junior historian organization as early as October 1946, almost seven years before the THJHA was founded! I had the opportunity to talk



(Left to right) Christopher Crittenden, Joye Jordan, and C. L. Criner with an art project in 1969.

with the Mrs. Jordan mentioned in the letter. Joye E. Jordan was the director of the Hall of History (the former name for the North Carolina Museum of History) from the late 1940s until 1974. She is over ninety years old now and lives in Raleigh. I asked Mrs. Jordan when she first heard about the junior historian movement. She confirmed that it was in the late 1940s, at a conference for museum directors in Cooperstown, New York.

In the archives, I found other letters between Christopher Crittenden and Clyde A. Erwin, superintendent of public instruction in the late 1940s, that indicated that the idea was being discussed between the two state departments. On August 11, 1947, Dr. Crittenden wrote to Dr. Erwin,

“The Junior Historian Movement has aroused a great deal of interest . . . and I feel it will be worth while to investigate the possibilities of launching such a movement in North Carolina. It will be appreciated if, sometime in the near future, you will give me an opportunity to discuss this matter with you. . . .” The correspondence files contain very sparse information after 1947. Although the idea was still on people’s minds, little action was taken until 1953.

Our Founding Fathers

In early 1953, Cartwright and McLendon entered the scene. Dr. Cartwright was chairman of the Department of Education at Duke University, and Dr. McLendon was a professor in the same department. Both men had been mentored by Edgar B. Wesley, a professor of history at the University of Minnesota. Wesley had supported the junior historian movement in that state and encouraged his protégés to get

North Carolina Society, Sons of the American Revolution.

January 1993: The *Tar Heel Junior Historian Essay Contest* is established to encourage student-written articles in the magazine. The contest is sponsored by the Museum of History Associates.

Awards Day 1993: THJHA celebrates its fortieth anniversary. Dr. William H. Cartwright, cofounder of THJHA, returns as a guest speaker.

August 1993: Two self-nominated positions are established on the THJHA Publications Advisory Board.

April 23, 1994: The new North Carolina Museum of History facility opens to the public in Raleigh.

May 1995: Junior historian Kate Burkart (Washington-Pamlico History Club, P. S. Jones Middle School, Washington, Debra Hardee, adviser) wins first place in the secondary individual Literary Contest for the project “Forgotten Legacy: African American Storm Warriors.”

August 1995: The new Tar Heel Junior Historian Association Gallery opens in the museum. As a venue for award-winning junior historian projects, the gallery is considered to be the only one of its kind in the nation.

1995–1996: With the start of this school year, the name of the junior historian convention changes from Awards Day to Annual Convention.

March 1996: Former junior historian Kate Burkart and THJHA program coordinator Mary Bradford attend a ceremony in Washington, D.C., at which the crew of the Pea Island Lifesaving Station is honored one hundred years after the crew's heroic efforts saved the passengers of a ship sinking offshore in a hurricane. Kate helped to initiate the recognition of the crew through letters to government officials.

1996: Junior historian Kate Burkart, of P. S. Jones Middle School in Washington, receives an Award of Merit from AASLH for the literary project "Forgotten Legacy: African American Storm Warriors."

1997: The Caswell-Nash Chapter, Daughters of the American Revolution, begins sponsoring an elementary level of the American Revolution Essay Contest.

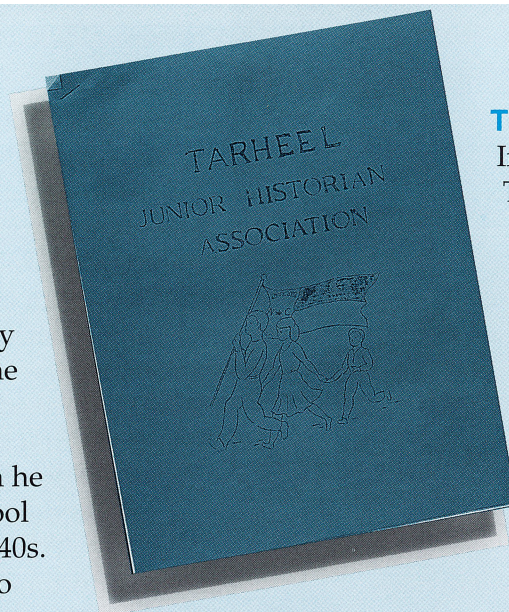
Annual Convention 1997: Junior historians can attend more workshops as a result of a change in the program format. Workshops are held at Mordecai Historic Park rather than on the Peace College campus.

Annual Convention 1999: The junior historian convention reverts to one day in length. It takes place at Historic Oak View County Park in Raleigh on May 7.

2000: Adviser Barbara Snowden (Currituck Junior Historians, Currituck County High School, Barco) receives an Award of Merit from AASLH for outstanding contributions to the study and preservation of Currituck County history.

involved with it. In an interview in November 2002, Dr. Cartwright told me that he had been actively involved with the junior historian program in Minnesota when he taught high school history in the 1940s. When he came to Duke in 1951, he wanted to make that university an important resource to the state's schools. He regularly attended annual meetings of North Carolina's school system superintendents and social studies teachers. "The junior historian movement," he said, "was a natural extension of my outreach to the schools."

In January 1953, Dr. Cartwright wrote to Dr. Crittenden saying that he and some of his colleagues were very interested in the junior historian movement and wanted to meet to talk about the possibility of starting an organization in North Carolina. Shortly thereafter, a bill authorizing a junior historian movement in North Carolina was drafted by the state Department of Archives and History and Department of Public Instruction. This bill was first introduced in the North Carolina Senate by Hamilton H. Hobgood of Franklin County. Edward F. Yarbrough of Louisburg sponsored it in the North Carolina House of Representatives. On April 22, 1953, the bill became law, and the Tar Heel Junior Historian Association was established. The resolution, known as Chapter 886 of the *Session Laws and Resolutions Passed by the General Assembly at the Regular Session of 1953*, is reprinted in its entirety on pages 758-759 of that publication.

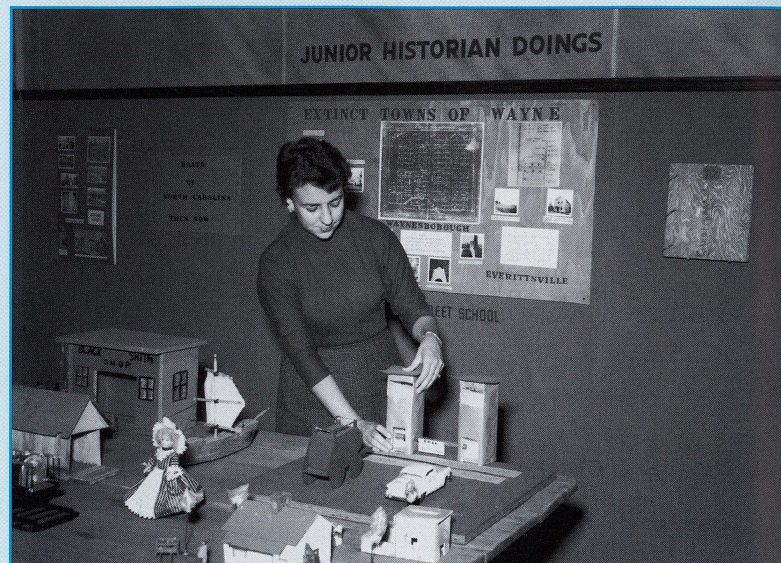


The first THJHA adviser manual, ca. 1953. Image courtesy of North Carolina State Archives.

The Bill Passed. Now What?

Immediately, the founders of THJHA got busy organizing the association and seeking support. Eight days after passage of the bill, Dr. Crittenden wrote to Dr. Cartwright, "At long last the General Assembly has passed the bill . . . and Mrs. Jordan and I are ready to have a conference with you about this matter." On May 20 the principal organizers met at the Department of Public Instruction in Raleigh to discuss how THJHA would be launched. When the General

Assembly passed the resolution that established THJHA, it did not make any appropriation for administering the program. In other words, it approved the idea of *having* junior historians in North Carolina but did not give any money to support the program. This meant that the



Mrs. Martha Farley works on the junior historian exhibit in the Hall of History in October 1956. Image courtesy of North Carolina State Archives.

organizers could not hire anyone to run the junior historian program. They had the responsibility of getting it up and running themselves.

At the May 20 meeting, they decided that Dr. Crittenden would try to secure funds from an independent foundation, and that if no funds were raised, they

would attempt to get started with volunteer workers. At the same time, the organizers began working on ways to publicize the movement and to solicit membership from the public schools. Despite writing to many foundations as far away as New York City and Battle Creek, Michigan, Dr. Crittenden could not get funding for THJHA. The organizers met again on August 20, 1953. This time, three committees were set up. J. E. Miller of Public Instruction was in charge of a committee that came up with a list of schools that might want to participate. Dr. McLendon was chairman of a committee to disseminate information about, or publicize, the program. And Dr. Cartwright chaired a committee that selected and trained volunteers, mostly historians and college professors, to go to schools in their areas and help establish THJHA clubs. The last committee was critical. Nothing like THJHA had been tried in North Carolina before, so people who knew about the junior historian movement were needed to represent the association at the local level. With his experience in other state junior historian societies, Dr. Cartwright made an invaluable contribution to this effort.

As much as Cartwright, McLendon, Crittenden, and Carroll were THJHA's fathers, Joye Jordan was its "founding mother." It was Mrs. Jordan, as head of the Hall of History, who assumed much of the responsibility for getting THJHA going in the early years. She coordinated all three committees and then became the first program coordinator, known then as the executive secretary. In late January 1954, Mrs. Jordan and the three committee chairmen held a meeting for eighth-grade North Carolina history educators at the Hall of History in Raleigh. Teachers and school administrators from around the state were invited to come learn more about the program. Mrs. Jordan recalled, "It [THJHA] took off like wildfire. I was surprised. I thought we would have to beg, but we didn't." On March 31, the



Tar Heel Junior Historians visit the Charles B. Aycock Birthplace near Goldsboro in 1958. Image courtesy of North Carolina State Archives.

Junior Historian Club of Roxboro, located at Earl Bradsher School in Roxboro, Person County, became the first club to complete the formal application process and receive a charter from THJHA. Hazel C. Breeze was the club's adviser. Two years later, at the end of the 1955-1956 school year, THJHA had grown from an initial three clubs to forty-six clubs. The association was off and running!

Thank You

As you can see, sometimes "history" is not always exactly what it seems to be. Our interpretations change over time. And, even in instances where the interpretation stays the same, there are usually details that make small differences—nuances—left out of the story. I hope this additional research helps to clarify the history of THJHA. I hope you realize now how many people were involved in founding our organization and what incredible effort they put forth. We owe a lot to Dr. Cartwright, Dr. McLendon, Dr. Crittenden, Mrs. Jordan, and others. They had a firm belief in youth and students' abilities to contribute to their own heritage. They realized the importance of local history. And they established an association that has withstood the test of time and is now one of the strongest youth history organizations in the country. To all of these men and women, THJHA says "thank you." 🌸

2000: Staff members begin developing on-line workshops for junior historian clubs.

2000-2001: The Civil War Essay Contest is established this school year. The contest will be sponsored by the North Carolina Society of the Military Order of the Stars and Bars.

Spring 2002: The publication of *Crossroads* is suspended due to budget restrictions.

Fall 2002: THJHA program coordinator Rebecca Lewis interviews association founders William H. Cartwright and Joye E. Jordan.

April 22, 2003: This date marks the fiftieth anniversary of THJHA.

Tar Heel Junior Historian Association Design a New Logo



Our current logo pays homage to the Dogwood (North Carolina's State Flower!). If you were to redesign a logo for THJHA, what would it look like? What North Carolina symbol would you pay homage to?

Historians Piece It All Together

By Debra A. Blake *

From *Tar Heel Junior Historian* 48: 2 (spring 2009).

Images may differ from those in the original article.

It may seem impossible in 2009 to know much about North Carolinians who lived in the 1700s. It's hard—but not impossible. Finding out small bits of information and putting them together to understand the past is what historians do. Reading and studying government documents—such as wills, marriage records, court minutes, and more—helps historians, students, and genealogists understand what life was like in the past. Each document gives clues about the person who created it. Through their research into such primary sources, historians follow clues to create a snapshot of past lives and places.

Detectives investigating a crime do the same thing when they follow clues until they form a picture of what happened.

Let's look at an example of historical document research that we'll call "the case of Mary Porter's will." A *will* is a document left by a person who has died that explains how he or she wants their property to be divided. Mary Porter lived in early northeastern North Carolina (in the Albemarle region). She was a fairly ordinary woman, but when she died in 1717, she left an extraordinary will. It is an extraordinary document for several reasons. For one thing, it is a will written by a woman, which was rare for the time period. Also, it is the will of a wealthy woman who carefully lists her various bequests, or gifts to other people. By studying this document, historians can learn about the lives of wealthy people in the early 1700s.

You can find wills and other government documents in places like the North Carolina State Archives. There are millions of documents in the archives, and historians often study them. They might have to analyze many different documents before any picture of the past becomes clear, since each document will give only a few clues.

The first step in our history detective work is to examine Mary Porter's will itself carefully, to see what information can be learned from it. The document was written on November 12, 1717. Porter states that she is a widow of "sound and perfect memory." She does not say that she is ill or old. In the body of the will, she mentions her children: sons, John, Edmund, and Joshua; and daughters, Elizabeth and Sarah. Sarah is married and has three daughters of her own: Elizabeth, Mary, and Sarah. At least one of the Porter sons is married and has a son, John, and another son has a daughter, Sarah. All of Porter's listed grandchildren are younger than eighteen. It is interesting to note that this family has a habit of repeating names in each generation. This practice can often cause confusion as to which person is being referred to in a document! Mary Porter's will was presented in court for probate—the process of making it legal—on January 21, 1718, which means that she died between November and January.

We can tell that Mary Porter was a slave owner with a great deal of personal property, which she carefully divides between her children. *Personal property* is everything that a person owned that was not land, which is *real property*. The will is very long and lists many interesting belongings that Mary felt were important enough to leave to someone—everything from chairs and spoons to pillowcases and shovels. She owned livestock and had crops in the field. She had some property in naval stores. The will mentions only one piece of real property, left to Mary's son Joshua. From the will, we learn that her son Edmund was not in North Carolina at the time but might have been on his way back to the colony.

Where can the history detective go to get more information about Mary Porter? She died almost three hundred years ago, and there are no books on her life. But the Albemarle region of North Carolina was not heavily settled at the time. There should be secondary sources that mention the area's wealthy or powerful people. In fact, numerous secondary sources do mention the Porter family, especially Mary's husband, John. The Porters were a prominent family and connected themselves through marriages to other prominent families. Good secondary sources give *citations* in their notes and bibliographies that researchers can follow to more secondary and primary sources that those authors used in their own research. In this way, you can follow a trail to learn more and more.

Some primary sources also should be checked for information, although the fact that Mary Porter was a woman makes that search more difficult. During this period, women did not have strong voices in government. Their fathers and husbands usually managed their lives, especially money matters. Widows, or women whose husbands had died, were sometimes exceptions. Given the detail in Mary Porter's will, an inventory or an account of an estate sale would be a wonderful discovery, since it would give us a more extensive list of her belongings and a sense of their worth. (In an estate sale, a deceased person's property is sold, with the money received divided among their heirs or beneficiaries.) Other types of documents could offer the researcher a view into Mary Porter's life. Deeds would tell about any land she owned. Tax records would reveal who and what she paid taxes on. Court records would show any time that she came before the legal court.

One original document that might provide more detail about Mary Porter is her husband's will. Even though John Porter died before Mary did, his will indeed proves to be a great source of information about his wife. Reading both wills, written a few years apart, the historian realizes that John and Mary are married; they name each other as spouses, and they name the same children. John Porter names Mary as his executrix, along with his son John as executor. (These are the people who are supposed to make sure that the dead person's wishes are carried out.) He states that he is a merchant, and sick and weak. He mentions all of his children, including a son named Mathew. Since Mary Porter's will does not mention Mathew, the researcher faces a challenge. Did Mathew die between his father's and mother's wills? Was he John's son but not Mary's? Had Mary already settled a legacy, or inheritance, on Mathew, and therefore had no need to take care of him in her will? Clearly, Mathew Porter is a subject for future study.

John Porter mentions land that he owns, giving some of it to each of his male children, and he gives slaves to his female children. Another interesting piece of information that we gain from John Porter's will is that he died in London, England. Even though he wrote the will in January

of 1710 in Albemarle County, it was probated in England in February of 1712. What he was doing in England is another subject worth investigating. (Several secondary sources provide information about this very subject.) Additional information learned from John Porter's will is that Joshua and Mathew were not yet twenty-one years old in 1710; daughter Sarah already was married to John Lillington; and daughter Elizabeth was not yet eighteen.

Another primary source that Mary Porter's will leads us to check involves the piece of real property that she leaves to one son. In July 1717, a few months before she died, Mary received a land grant—a deed for property bought from the government—for 264 acres. This is the same property left in her will to Joshua. A look in the deed books shows more deeds in which Porter sold slaves to her son in 1715. The will tells us other things, like the fact that Mary Porter had an American Indian slave or servant woman named Judith. This raises questions, such as whether enslavement of American Indians was common in that area at the time. Since John Porter did not mention Judith in his will, it would be interesting to know how and when Mary Porter acquired Judith.

The will tells us that Mary's son Edmund was not "in this Government," but it is not clear whether this means North Carolina or the colonies in general. Where was he, and why? This detail leads to a real story that you can learn about Edmund Porter, as well as his father, John, and brother John. The three men were involved in Cary's Rebellion and forced to leave the colonies because of this involvement. (See what else you can find out!)

As you have seen through this study of the case of Mary Porter's will, a researcher can discover a lot from one primary source. But there is more work to do. One document will lead to more documents. This slow gathering of information allows the historian to develop a picture of the past that might not be seen otherwise. Primary documents are the direct connection to history. Someday, historians will learn about life in 2009 in much the same way.

*At the time of this article's publication, Debra A. Blake was the manager of the Public Services Branch at the State Archives, North Carolina Office of Archives and History. She has written numerous articles and given many lectures on using the primary sources available at the State Archives.

The first part of Mary Porter's will

"In the Name of God Amen, this 12th day of November, 1717 I Mary Porter of Chowan precinct in the County of Albemarle, in the province of North Carolina Widow being of sound and perfect memory, doe make Constitute and ordaine Declare and apoint this to be my last Will and Testament Revokeing and annulling by these presents all former and other Will and Wills heretofore by me made in manner and form following Impts, I recomend my Soul into the hands of allmighty God who gave it and my body I comit to the earth to be Decently buried at the discretion of my Exors hereinafter named, Item I give and bequeath unto my well beloved Son John Porter my Negroe man knowne by the Name of Sandy half a dozen Rousia leather Chairs my oval Table large one midle Sized pewter dish, 2 large pewter basons and a Shovel and tongs tipped with Brass Item I give and bequeath unto my well beloved Son Edmund Porter my Negroe man knowne by the name of Oliver one large plank chest one Silver Drinking cup with 2 handles half a dosen Silver Spoons one large China bason already in his possession the large pair of Tongs and Shovel one bedstead one wooden couch the largest of the Small looking glasses the large Cedar table half a dosen painted Chairs and my whole Stock of hoggs that I shall leave at my decease After my Debts and legacys paid and one pair of Iron Doggs, 50 # weight of feathers and all the money due to me lying in the hands of Mr. Welstead and Oliver, Merchts, in Boston he paying out of the sd. money within Six Months After the receiving it unto my beloved Daughter, Eliz. Porter Six Silver Spoons each weighing Ten Shillings Sterling at least, and one Iron pot & pot hooks and 12 Soup plates But it is my Will and pleasure that if the sd Edmund shall not be in this Government at my decease that then and in Such Case all and every of the Legacys here left to the sd. Edmund shall remain in the Exors hands hereafter Named until his arrival here or until he shall impower any person After my Decease to take and receive the Same and if it shall happen that the sd. Edmund Shall never arrive here nor Impower any person as Aforsd. after my Decease then all & every of the Legacys Afrsd. I give and bequeath to my Sons John Porter and Joshua Porter and to my Daughter Eliz: Porter to be equally divided amongst them, Item I give and bequeath unto my Wel beloved Son Joshua Porter a tract of Land lyeing in Yawpim . . . "

*--Transcription courtesy of Debra A. Blake. For a full transcription, access
www.greatdreams.com/henry/porter-wills.htm.*

Mary Porter's Will

Think like a Junior Historian and use those skills to analyze Mary Porter's will! Try to decipher what she left behind and to who using her will as a primary source. We included a transcription too in case you get stuck.

In the Name of God Amen this 12th day of November 1777 I Mary Porter of 139
 Chowan precinct in the County of Albemarle in the Province of North Carolina
 Widow being of sound and perfect memory doe make Constitute and Ordaine
 Declare and appoint this to be my last Will and Testament Revoking and
 annulling by these presents all former and other Will or Wills heretofore by me
 made in manner and forme following In witness whereof I recommend my soul into the
 hands of Almighty God who gave it and my body I commit to the earth to be
 decently buried at the discretion of my Exors hereafter named, Item I give and
 bequeath unto my well beloved son John Porter my Negro man known by
 the Name of Sandy half adown Rousieo Leather Chair my oval Table large oval
 Middle sized puster dish a large pewter basons and adobe and tongs tied
 with Brass Item I give and bequeath unto my well beloved son Edmund Porter
 my Negro man known by the Name of David one large plank chest one silver
 Drinking cup with a handle half adown silver spoons one large China bason
 already in his possession the large pair of tongs and shovel one bedstead one wooden
 Couch the largest of the small looking glasses the large Cedar table half adown
 painted Chair and my whole stock of Doggs that I shall have at my Decese
 after my debts and Legacies paid and one pair of Iron Doggs, 50 weight of Sealant
 and all the money due to me lying in the hands of Mr. Wetstead and Oliver
 Merritt in Boston he paying out of the said money within six Months after the
 receiving it unto my beloved Daughter Elizabeth Porter six silver spoons each weighing
 Ten shillings Sterling at least; and one Iron pot and pot hooks and 12 Soup plates
 But it is my Will and pleasure that if the said Edmund shall not be in this
 Government at my Decese that then and in such case all and every of the
 Legacies here left to the said Edmund shall remain in the Exors hands hereafter Named
 until his arrival here or until he shall Impower any Person after my Decese
 to take and receive the same and if it shall happen that the said Edmund shall
 never arrive here nor Impower any Person as aforesaid after my Decese then all
 every of the Legacies aforesaid I give and bequeath to my sons John Porter and Joshua
 Porter and to my Daughter Elizabeth Porter to be equally divided amongst them Item
 I give and bequeath unto my well beloved son Joshua Porter a chest of Linen
 in Garment bounded by Mr. Claytons and Mr. Parks lines to him the said Joshua
 and his heirs forever, my Negro Woman known by the Name of Dy one taken
 Feather Bed and bolster and two pillows one Feather bed covered with Canvas
 and bolster and one pillow three pillows caps suitable two pair fine Sheets 12
 of Coarse sheets one set of red Watered Curtains and Wallons one spotted
 Worsted Rugg 1 Red rugg 2 yd. good Blankets 1 flowered Bed covered 1 Bedstead
 that stood in the back Chamber six Rousieo Leather chairs one of the large
 looking glasses and my largest and one Midling Iron pot the large
 and round large brass Skillet and Trivet and one brass Candlestick one pair
 of Brass scales and weights 1 pair of Shillegards two Superior Towels a pair

Mary Porter's Will

40 mustard pot the Coarset of my Brass rides my Dargick lock Chestoline
 sifer my case of Pinors and forket, a brot cut Saw a writing Desk four
 pewter springers 1 earthen springers 10 pewter plates 1 Iron plate 1 Oak
 Table 1 large Soup pewter dish 1 large Shallow ditto 1 middle sized ditto 1 large
 Small pewter bason 2 earthen basons and 2 plates ditto 1 set of Wedges and
 six wooden chairs 2 Joint stools 2 wooden turned chairs 2 Iron frames
 1 brass batter Ladle 1 small brass kettle 1 pewter chamber pot ahead Milk
 peckers 1 Glass salt 1 Iron chaffing dish a pair of bellows also my rag
 Hooks a square cloath brush a brot and Curving Knife and the half
 of my Sheep and Cattle and the half of a Tan Pelaw now on foot and the
 half of all my Crop now in the ground with a pottle pewter pot &
 a pint pewter pot 1 Glass Galle: Bottle and ahead also my Debt font to
 be dedicated them I give and bequeath unto my beloved Daughter
 Sarah Lillington my Negro woman called Maria 1 Chest of Drawers
 six painted chairs now in her possession 1 pair of Iron fire Tongs 1 small
 Cedar table 1 pair fine sheet 2 pair coarse sheet 2 pair pillow Cases Two
 Draper towels my large quilt one Lignum Vita Spice Morter one
 large Soup dish 1 middle sized dish 1 small pewter bason 1 brass Shiner
 1 small Iron kettle the least of my painted Trunks 2 earthen basons
 and plates one English flasket 1 large Glass bottle one Stone Jugg 1 pewter
 Chamber pot one bed pan, three of my others which she likes best and
 the full third part of the cotton and wooll that shall belong to me
 at my dease, them I give and bequeath unto my beloved Daughter
 Elisabeth Porter my Indian Woman called Judith and her Daughter
 named Sukey 1 Chest of Drawers one oval Table my best set of red
 Curtains and Valans belonging to my Lodging roome one Fether
 Feather bed and bolster 4 pillows one bedstead belonging also to my
 Lodging roome, three pair of fine sheet 2 pair Coarse sheet 4 pillows
 also my Green Rug made of woad 1 pair of the best soft Blankets
 the least of my quilt my calico counterpane and Tester cloath my
 bible my Spice box 1 warming pan 1 pair Chamber Tongs with brass black
 Trunk and one painted trunk a large brass kettle and two Shavers
 a brass Linc and 2 Iron pots 1 linked Frame a brass flom 1 Copper
 Chocolat pot 1 white rug 1 Gridiron 4 matted chairs my Silver salt
 marked I P M and a Silver paper box with the same Marke clays
 pewter Soup dish one Shallow ditto 2 middling pewter dishes 1 large and
 1 small pewter bason 10 pewter plates 8 painted chairs 2 pewter springers
 1 pair brass Boudeshirts and buffers and must dish, my Iron Shing Iron
 Healers and frame 1 Galle Stone Jugg 1 Glass Buid Two Glass cups one
 Mustard pott 2 pewter Chamber 2 earthen basons 1 large dish and 2
 plates 1 Lin minding pan 1 spit 1 leaden pan and 2 painted hushes a brass
 Shovel and tong 1 large Looking Glass the best of the bed panms 1 pewter salt

Mary Porter's Will

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1 Glass decanter 2 tin dish Coven 1 half ride 1 large turned Elbow Chair 10 dozen pans
 1 Cask of bottles one half of sheep and Cattle that shall remain after my Debt and
 Legacies paid and half of the Land here now on foot and half the Crop now in
 the ground 12 diaper Napkins one diaper Table Cloth 1200 diaper Towels and
 one Bell metal Sallet, Item I give and bequeath unto my Grandson John
 Porter 1 young Cow and one young Ewe to run for his benefit at my decease
 to be delivered to him with the increase at the age of one and twenty a Day
 of Marriage which shall first happen and also my Silver Tankard I M to be
 delivered at the same time Item I give and bequeath unto my Granddaughter
 Sarah Porter one young Cow and one young Ewe at my decease to run for her
 benefit and also Silver Spoons Marked I M to be delivered to her with the
 increase at the age of eighteen years a day of Marriage which shall first
 happen, Item I give and bequeath unto my Granddaughter Eliza Bell
 Silington one young Cow and one young Ewe and my Smallest looking
 Glass to be delivered with the increase at the age of eighteen years a day
 of Marriage Item I give and bequeath unto my Granddaughter Mary
 Silington one young Cow and one young Ewe and my Silver Trench
 Dish Marked I M to be delivered to her with their increase at the age of
 eighteen years a day of Marriage which shall first happen, Item I give
 and bequeath unto my Granddaughter Sarah Silington one young Cow
 and one young Ewe to be delivered to her with their increase at the age
 of eighteen years a day of Marriage which shall first happen, Item I give
 and bequeath unto Robert Smith if alive and in this Government
 at my decease the Sum of five pounds to be paid out of my Estate Item all
 the rest and residue of Estate not herein and hereby disposed of debts
 being thereout first deducted I give and bequeath unto my Son Joshua
 Porter and my Daughter Eliz. Porter to be equally divided between them
 and lastly I do hereby Nominate and appoint my Said Sons John
 Porter and Joshua to be Executors jointly and severally of this my Last
 Will and Testament but it is my Will and pleasure and I do hereby
 Nominate and appoint my son Tour upon his arrival in this Govern-
 After my Decease Joint For with his Two Brothers
 Signed Sealed and Delivered
 in presence of Goodrich Chowanck
Morry Haey July 21. 1717 proved in open Court by the
Oath of John Goodrich Robert Smith & Co.
 Letters Granted to the Exors Decemb. 12. 1718

Mary Porter's Will Transcription

North Carolina, SS.

In the Name of God Amen, this 12th day of November, 1717 I Mary Porter of Chowan precinct in the County of Albemarle, in the province of North Carolina Widow being of sound and perfect memory, doe make Constitute and ordaine Declare and apoint this to be my last Will and Testament Revokeing and annulling by these presents all former and other Will and Wills heretofore by me made in manner and form following Impts, I recomend my Soul into the hands of allmighty God who gave it and my body I comit to the earth to be Decently buried at the discretion of my Exors hereinafter named,

Item I give and bequeath unto my well beloved Son John Porter my Negroe man knowne by the Name of Sandy half a dozen Rousia leather Chairs my oval Table large one midle Sized pewter dish, 2 large pewter basons and a Shovel and tongs tipped with Brass Item I give and bequeath unto my well beloved Son Edmund Porter my Negroe man knowne by the name of Oliver one large plank chest one Silver Drinking cup with 2 handles half a dosen Silver Spoons one large China bason already in his possession the large pair of Tongs and Shovel one bedstead one wooden couch the largest of the Small looking glasses the large Cedar table half a dosen painted Chairs and my whole Stock of hoggs that I shall leave at my decease After my Debts and legacys paid and one pair of Iron Doggs, 50 # weight of feathers and all the money due to me lying in the hands of M^r. Welstead and Oliver, Merch^{ts}, in Boston he paying out of the s^d. money within Six Months After the receiving it unto my beloved Daughter, Eliz. Porter Six Silver Spoons each weighing Ten Shillings Sterling at least, and one Iron pot & pot hooks and 12 Soup plates But it is my Will and pleasure that if the s^d Edmund shall not be in this Government at my decease that then and in Such Case all and every of the Legacys here left to the s^d. Edmund shall remain in the Exors hands hereafter Named until his arrival here or until he shall impower any person After my Decease to take and receive the Same and if it shall happen that the s^d. Edmund Shall never arrive here nor Impower any person as Afors^d. after my Decease then all & every of the Legacys Afrs^d. I give and bequeath to my Sons John Porter and Joshua Porter and to my Daughter Eliz: Porter to be equally divided amongst them, Item I give and bequeath unto my Wel beloved Son Joshua Porter a tract of Land lyeing in Yawpim, bounded by Mr. Clayton's & Mr. Clarks lines to him the s^d Joshua and his heirs forever my Negroe woman knowne by the Name of Edy one ticken Feather bed and bolster and Two Pillows one feather bed covered with Canvas and bolster and one Pillow three pillow cases Suitable Two pair fine Sheets 2 p^r of Coarse Sheets one Set of red watered Curtains and Wallons one Spotted worsted Rugg, 1 Red Rugg 2 p^r good Blankets 1 flowered Bed Covered 1 Bedstead that Stood in the hall Chamber Six Rousia leather chairs one of the large looking glasses and my largest and one middling Iron pot the large andirons a large brass Skillet and Trivet and one brass Candlestick one pair brass Scales and weights 1 pair of Shillifards two Drapier towells a pewter mustard pott the Coarsest of brass ridles my Dantzick lock Chest a lime Sifter a Case of Knives and forks, a Cross cut Saw a writeing Desk four Pewter Porringers, 1 earthen Poringers, 10 pewter plates 1 Iron pestle 1 Ash Table 1 large Soup Pewter dish one large Shallow Dito one midle Sized D^o 1

large 1 Small Pewter bason 2 Earthen basons and 2 plates Do 1 set of Wedges and Six wooden Chairs 2 Joint Stooles 2 wooden turned chairs 2 Iron Tramel 1 brass butter ladle 1 small brass Kettle 1 pewter chamber pot a hand Mill peckers 1 glass salt 1 Iron chafing dish a pair bellows all my reape Books a Square cloath brush a faroe and Currying Knife and the half of my Sheep and Cattle and the half of a Tarr Kilne now on foot and the half of all my Crop now in the ground with a pottle pewter pot and a pint pewter pot 1 Glass Gall: Bottle and a broad Axe my Debts first to be deducted Item, I give and bequeath unto my beloved Daughter Sarah Lilington my Negroe woman called Maria 1 Chest of Drawers six painted chairs now in her possession one pair of Iron fire dogs 1 small Cedar table 1 pair of fine Sheets 2 pair coarse Sheets 2 pillow cases Two drapier towels, my larges quilt one lignum Vitae Spice Morter one large Soup dish 1 midle Sized dish 1 Small pewter bason 1 brass Skimer 1 Small Iron kettle the least of my painted Trunks 2 earthen basons and plates 1 English Flasket 1 large Glass bottle one Stone Jugg 1 pewter Chamber pot 1 bed pann, three of my others which she likes best and the full third part of the cotton and Wooll that shall belong to me at my decease, Item I give and bequeath unto my beloved daughter Elizabeth Porter my Indian woman called Judith and her daughter Named Sukey 1 chest of Drawers one oval Table my best Set of ~~red~~ Curtains & Valens belonging to my lodging roome one Ticken Feather bed and bolster 4 pillows one bedstead belonging also to my lodging roome, three pair of fine Sheets 2 pair Coarse sheets 4 pillow Cases my Green Rugg made of worsted 1 pair of the best rose blankets the least of my quilts my Calico counterpane and Tester cloath, my bible my Spice box 1 warming pan 1 p^r Chamber doggs with brass 1 Black Trunk and one painted trunk a large brass Kettle and Two Skimmers, a Brass Shie and 2 Iron potts one linked Tramel a brass Flam one Copper Chocolat pot 1 white rug 1 Gridiron four matted Chairs my Silver Salt Marked I PM, and a Silver peper box with the Same marke large pewter Soup dish 1 Shallow D^o 2 midling pewter dishes 1 large and 1 Small pewter bason 10 pewter plates, 6 painted chairs 5 pewter porringers 1 p^r brass Candlesticks and snuffers and Snuff dish my Smoothing Iron heaters and Frame 1 Gall Stone Jugg 1 Glass Cruet Two glass cups one mustard pott 2 pewter Chamber 3 earthen basons 1 large dish and 2 plates 1 Tin pudding pan 1 Spit 1 leaden pan and 2 painted brushes a brass shovel and tongs 1 large looking Glass the best of the bed pans, 1 pewter Salt 1 Glass Decanter 2 tin dish Covers 1 brass Ridle a large turned Elbow chair 1 Dripen pan 1 Case of bottles, one half of my Sheep and Cattle that shall remain after my Debts and legacys paid and half of the Tarr Kiln now on foot and half the Crop now in the ground, 12 drapier napkins one drapier Table Cloath, Two drapier Towells and one Bell skillet, Item, I give and bequeath unto my Grandson John Porter, 1 Young Cowe and 1 Young Ewe, to run for his Benefit at my decrease to be delivered to him with the increase at the age of one and twenty or day of Marriage which shall first happen and also my Silver tankard marked IPM to be delivered at the same time Item I give and begueath unto my Grand daughter Sarah Porter one young Cowe and one young Ewe at my decease to run for her benefit and also Six Silver Spoons Marked IPM to be delivered to her with the encrease at the age of eighteen years or day of Marriage which Shall first happen Item I give and bequeath unto my Grandaughter Elizabeth Lilington one Young Cowe and one Young Ewe and my Smallest looking Glass to be delivered with the encrease at the age of eighteen years or day of Marriage Item I give and bequeath unto my

Grandaughter Mary Lilington one young Cowe and one Young Ewe and my Silver Dram Cup Marked IPM, to be delivered to her with their encrease at the age of eighteen Years, or day of Marraige which shall first happen, Item I give and bequeath unto my granddaughter Sarah Lilington one Young Cowe and one young Ewe to be delivered to her with their encrease at the age of eighteen years or day of Marriage, which shall first happen, Item I give and bequeath unto Robert Herrick if alive and in this Government at my decease, the Sum of five pounds to be paid out of my Estate Item, all the rest and residue of Estate not herein and hereby disposed of debts being thereout first Deducted I give and bequeath unto my son Joshua Porter, and my Daughter Eliz: Porter to be equally Divided between them and lastly I doe hereby nominate and appoint my said Sonns, John Porter and Joshua to be Exors Jointly and Seperatly of this my s^d last Will and Testament but it is my Will and pleasure and I doe hereby nominate and appoint my Son Edmund upon his Arrival in this Government After my Decease Joint Exor with his Two Brothers.

Mary M Porter (Seal)

Signed, Sealed and Delivered
in the presence of:

JLovick Chowan SS
Mary X Henry

Jany 21st, 1717

proved in open Court by the oath of John Lovick.

Robert H CC

Letters Granted to the Exors Decemb^r 12th 1718

Transcription of the will of Mary Porter provided by the North Carolina State Archives.

Mary Porter's Will Worksheet

How many children did Mary Porter have? _____ Name them.

Why do you think some children received more things than others?

What does Mary Porter mean by the phrase "in this Government" when referring to her son Edmund?

At what age might a girl get married?

The will is dated 1717. Who was governor of North Carolina at that time?

Was North Carolina a state in 1717?

Where is Chowan County located in North Carolina?

What is an ewe?

What is a looking glass?

What is a ticked bed?

What does Mary Porter mean by the phrases “my Negroe man” and “my Negroe woman”?

Can you own another person today?

Were American Indians enslaved during the colonial period?

Based on the items listed in the will, do you think the Porter family was wealthy, poor, or middle class? Why?

Is there anything not listed in the will that you think Mary Porter would also have owned?

What can you tell about North Carolina society in the early 1700s based on the items listed in the will? What types of things were valued at that time?

Make an inventory list of items in your bedroom on another sheet of paper. Can you list everything?

How does the number of items in your room compare to the number of items Mary Porter owned?

How do the types of items you own differ from those Mary Porter owned?

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